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NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:
Joann Wardrip, (202) 586-4940

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DOE to Transport Moab Mill Tailings by Rail

Department Approves Project Baseline and Obtains Nuclear Regulatory Commission Nod

WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today reaffirmed its prior decision to relocate mill tailings predominantly by rail from the former uranium-ore processing site near Moab, Utah, 30 miles north to Crescent Junction, Utah. As determined previously, oversized material that is not practical to be sized to fit into the containers will be transported by truck.

"After evaluating the alternatives for safely transporting the mill tailings from Moab and considering input received from citizens in the Moab community and surrounding areas, DOE has decided to ship the tailings using the existing Union Pacific Railroad track," said DOE Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management James A. Rispoli. "We believe our decision will be most protective of the community over the long-term."

As part of its evaluation of options for transporting the tailings, DOE reviewed a traffic study commissioned by the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) of the U.S. Highway 191 transportation corridor that would be used to haul the material. A final transportation agreement is pending between the railroad and EnergySolutions, DOE's Remedial Action Contractor responsible for initiating cleanup of the Moab site. The substantial rail infrastructure work is anticipated to begin in fall 2008 and is expected to be complete in late spring 2009. DOE and EnergySolutions are also working with UDOT on highway access requirements for the trucks carrying containers across State Route 279 to reach the rail load out area and for road upgrades needed at crossings along the railroad. "DOE appreciates the willingness of Union Pacific and UDOT to help us meet our goals," said Rispoli.

Two other recent actions have also paved the way for this project to move forward. First, the Department has approved the Moab Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action (UMTRA) Project performance baseline, which contains the collective key schedule, scope, and cost parameters. The Department's Moab UMTRA Project 2028 baseline allows construction of transportation infrastructure on the project to proceed and will facilitate the goal of a 2019 completion date, if sufficient additional funding is appropriated by Congress. Additional appropriations will be required to complete the work earlier than 2028. Further, early completion is also subject to many factors beyond

sufficient funding, including infrastructure and workforce capacities and shipment disruptions.

The second action that will advance the Moab UMTRA Project is the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) conditional concurrence of DOE's Final Remedial Action Plan and Site Design for Stabilization of Moab Title I Uranium Mill Tailings at the Crescent Junction, Utah, Disposal Site (Remedial Action Plan), which allows DOE to proceed with construction of the disposal cell at Crescent Junction. The Department has been collaborating with the NRC since August 2006, when DOE submitted its draft Remedial Action Plan for the cleanup of the site. "NRC's concurrence with DOE's Moab UMTRA Project's Remedial Action Plan was received in record time for a uranium mill tailings Title I site," said Rispoli. "The ongoing coordination with the NRC over the past two years has ensured comments were addressed in a timely manner and will ultimately allow the Department to expedite this project." Once a final ground water remedy has been implemented at the Moab site, the NRC will be able to give its full concurrence on the Remedial Action Plan.

DOE amended its Record of Decision for the Moab UMTRA Project in February 2008 to allow more truck transport of the tailings. Although this is not anticipated to be a primary mode of transportation, DOE may still consider using truck transport under certain circumstances to continue to advance environmental cleanup, such as in the event that a storm significantly affects rail operations. If extended truck transport were to become necessary, DOE would inform the public and coordinate with UDOT on highway upgrades, if any, that would be needed.

Key infrastructure work for the project has continued in areas not associated with a specific transportation mode while options for moving the tailings were being evaluated. In May 2008, DOE completed the installation of a 21-mile waterline from the Green River in Utah to the Crescent Junction site that will supply construction water for dust suppression and compaction of materials in the disposal cell. The Department has also constructed a freshwater reservoir near the disposal site to store water pumped from the Green River and began excavating the disposal cell in preparation for tailings placement. At the Moab site, construction has begun on the structure that will remove and apply metal lids to containers that will carry the tailings. Finally, DOE continues the successful extraction of contaminated ground water through a system of wells before it reaches the Colorado River.

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